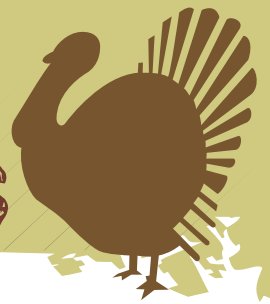
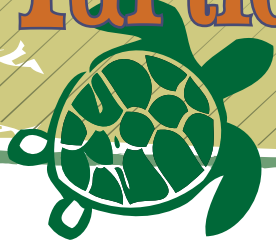
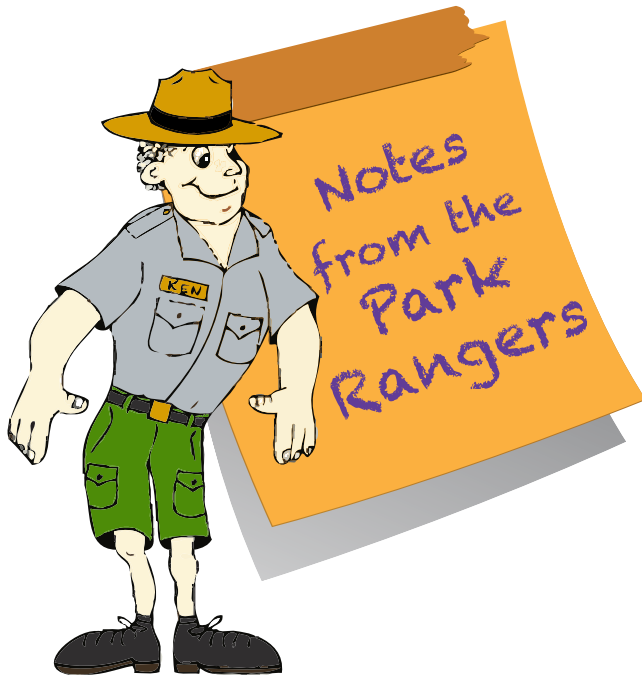


# Turtle Tracks & Turkey Tails



A Newsletter for Junior Rangers and their Families Winter 2010



One job of a North Carolina Park Ranger is to protect the animals that live in our state parks. To protect them, we need to first figure out what kind of animals live in each park. Next, rangers must find out what these animals need to live healthy lives. All animals need food, clean water, clean air and a safe home. However, some animals have special needs.



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For example, the Eastern Hellbender is a big salamander that lives in the New River. This river is in the mountains of North Carolina. The Hellbender needs clean, clear and cold water to live in. It could not live in a muddy, warm lake along the coast. One way rangers protect the Hellbender is by planting trees along the river. The tree roots hold the soil together and keep the river from becoming muddy. The shade from these trees also helps to keep the river's water cold.

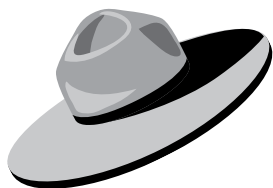
Other state parks have animals with special needs too. Hammocks Beach State Park is visited by Loggerhead Sea Turtles. The turtles come to the beach to lay eggs in the soft, warm sand. After the baby turtles hatch, they dig themselves out of the sand and crawl back to the sea. These sea turtles would not be able to lay their eggs in the hard, cold dirt found in the mountains.

Knowing what animals live in your state park and even in your backyard is the first step you can take to help protect them. You and your family can find out what animals live near you by taking a trip to your nearest state park. Hope to see you soon!

- by Doug Blatny, Ranger at New River State Park



# Upcoming Events



**February 5th - 6:30 p.m. and March 12th - 8:00 p.m.**

## **Monthly Astronomy Viewing at Jordan Lake**

Join astronomers with the Morehead Planetarium to see planets and stars at the Ebenezer Church Recreation Area. Check the "News" listing at the home page of [www.moreheadplanetarium.org](http://www.moreheadplanetarium.org) or call Guest Relations at (919) 962-1236 on the day of the sky watching session to be sure of weather conditions.

**February 5th**

## **Junior Ranger Day at Marbles Kids Museum**

The Great Outdoor Provision Co. and North Carolina state park rangers will be at the Marbles Kids Museum in Raleigh for a special day of fun. Learn more at [www.marbleskids-museum.org](http://www.marbleskids-museum.org)

**February 18th - 21st**

## **The Great Backyard Bird Count**

You get to be the scientist for this four-day event! Just keep count of the different types of birds you see in your backyard or at the park. Then go online to record your count. It's fun and it helps us learn more about the birds. To learn more, go to [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc).

**February 26th**

## **Salamanders of Merchants Millpond**

Join us at the Visitor Center of Merchants Millpond State Park for a salamander slide show. If weather permits, we may go outside and look for some live specimens. Begins at 10:00 a.m.

**March 12th**

## **Reptile and Amphibian Day**

Come to the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences in Raleigh to learn about reptiles and amphibians in North Carolina. Live reptiles from around the world, fun games and more.

**March 20th**

## **1st Day of Spring Hike at Lake Waccamaw**

Celebrate the 1st day of spring with a ranger-led hike. Meet at 4:00 p.m. at the Lake Waccamaw State Park visitor center.

**April 18th - 22nd**

## **South Mountains Nature Detectives**

Join a park ranger this spring break to learn all sorts of fun stuff about water critters, trees, animals and fish just to name a few. Fun programs will be offered each day at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

# The Laughing Gull



A baby snake asked the Momma snake, "Mom, are we venomous?" The Momma said, "No, why?" The baby snake said, "Because I just bit my tongue!!!"

What do you get when you cross a porcupine with a turtle?

**A slow poke.**

Send your funny and corny jokes to the laughing gull at [denr.dpr.education@ncmail.net](mailto:denr.dpr.education@ncmail.net)



# The NATURE WALL

**Photos, artwork, poems and stories**  
from Park Rangers and Junior Rangers



Junior Ranger Eleanor's great Bullfrog photo along the trail



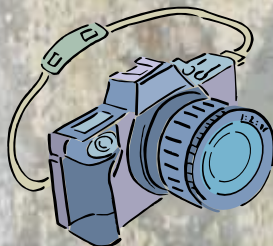
Quiet stream in winter by  
Junior Ranger Jennifer



Box Turtle crossing the road at Kerr Lake by Park Ranger Jarid Church.



Icy rapids along the Eno River.



**Send in your photos at [denr.dpr.education@ncmail.net](mailto:denr.dpr.education@ncmail.net) or mail them in to Education, 1615 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699. Be sure to include your name and address. Every junior ranger who sends in a photo, poem or artwork will receive a special prize in the mail!**



# Nature Notes from the Trail

So far, we have had a snowy winter in North Carolina state parks. Even parks on the coast have gotten snow! Here are this winter's snowfall totals at three different parks from December 1, 2010 to January 22, 2011:

- Fort Macon State Park - 9 inches
- Falls Lake State Recreation Area - 8 inches
- Mount Mitchell State Park - 86 inches

Mount Mitchell normally gets more than 100 inches of snow each year. The coldest temperature ever recorded in North Carolina was -34 ° F on Mount Mitchell. **Brrrrrrr!**

## Tell us about your unique wildlife sighting!

Write [denr.dpr.education@ncmail.net](mailto:denr.dpr.education@ncmail.net) or [sean.higgins@ncdenr.gov](mailto:sean.higgins@ncdenr.gov).

Or mail your message to Junior Rangers,  
1615 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699.

